

Proclamation 5292 of January 14, 1985

National Sanctity of Human Life Day, 1985

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

America was founded by men and women who shared a vision of the value of each and every individual. Our forebears strove to build a nation in which the dignity of every person was respected and the rights of all were secure. Our laws have sought to foster and protect human life at all its stages.

Legal acceptance of abortion imperils this cherished tradition. By permitting the destruction of unborn children throughout the term of pregnancy, our laws have brought about an inestimable loss of human life and potential. Yet the tragedy of abortion extends beyond the loss of the nearly 17 million children who have been robbed of the gift of life. This tragedy is multifaceted—inflicting emotional harm on women, denying prospective adoptive couples the joy of sharing their loving homes with children, and eroding respect for the most fundamental of rights, the right to life.

No cause is more important than restoring respect for this right because the freedoms we hold so dear cannot endure as long as some lives are regarded as unworthy of protection. Nor can our commitment to defend the dignity of all persons survive if we remain indifferent to the destruction of 1.5 million children each year in the United States.

I do not believe that Americans will continue to tolerate this practice. Respect for the sanctity of human life remains too deeply engrained in the hearts of our people to remain forever suppressed. This respect for life is evident in communities throughout our Nation where people are reaching out, in a spirit of understanding and helping, to women with crisis pregnancies and to those who bear the spiritual and emotional scars of abortion. Such efforts strengthen the bonds of affection and obligation that unite us and assure that the family, the primary guardian of life and human values, will continue to be the foundation of our society.

If America is to remain what God, in His wisdom, intended for it to be—a refuge, a safe haven for those seeking human rights—then we must once again extend the most basic human right to the most vulnerable members of the human family. We must commit ourselves to a future in which the right to life of every human being—no matter how weak, no matter how small, no matter how defenseless—is protected by our laws and public policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, January 20, 1985, as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. I call upon the citizens of this blessed land to gather on that day in homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life, and to reaffirm our commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of each human life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN